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Aspects of Tucano Culture
Mythology -- Part I

By Marcos Fulop

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Preliminary Note

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The material presented here was collected between June 11 and September 9, 1954, when field work was done in the village /Sp. caserío/ of Guadalajara, located on the Paca River, a tributary of the Papurí River, in the Comisaría Especial del Vaupés. Performing the functions of informant and interpreter were Marcos Sierra and Manuel Sierra respectively, blood brothers and residents of the village of Guadalajara.

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The mythology that appears in this article is a very small portion of the total Tukano /Tucano/ mythology. The author has considered it advisable not to analyze individually the myths published here, but to wait until all the Tukano mythology has been collected and published.

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/339/ I. Boraró and Boraró Numió

A man and a woman stayed in Diaojpekowí, and they were brother and sister. These two beings do not have children, but will never die. When they want to leave Diaojpekowí, they turn themselves into spirits. The man is named Boraró, and the woman is named Boraró Numió. Boraró and Boraró Numió kill people by opening a hole in their heads and sucking out the entire body through this hole. They leave only the skin of the victim, which they throw on a tree /Sp. palo/. To kill her victim, Boraró Numió lies down face up and begins to urinate at a distance of about 150 meters from her victim. Boraró, to kill his victim, urinates standing at a distance of about 150 meters from his victim. And when Boraró and Boraró Numió urinate, everyone that is within those 150 meters falls dead instantly.

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V. Miriápara Majsá.

Yepá Huáke left six persons, three women and three men, in Diawí. And they are called Mariápara Majsá. They are in charge of the spirits of Miriá (5).

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5. Of the Yuruparises. Ceremonial flutes used in the initiation ceremonies for the pubescent boys. It is forbidden for women to see these flutes.

VI. Ñebariuajtí.

In Namiriwí, Yepá Huáke left a male and a female who are named Ñebariuajtí. And these two beings have the same human form as Boraró and Boraró Numió. And they kill and steal people's souls in the same way as Boraró and Boraró Numió do.

VII. Sexual Relations (6).

6. Name that the interpreter insisted on giving to the myth.

Yepá Huáke left in Diawí two brothers with their papa and mama. And the four were called Bajsébo Majsá. And they left Diawí and went to Bajsebowí. Before Yúpuri Baúro (7)

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7. Yúpuri Baúro is the most important mythological culture hero in Tucano /Tucano/ culture. He is also the founder of the sib /Sp. sib/ of the highest category among the Tucano.

discovered these lands, the Tucano /Tucano/ did not have children. In Bajsebowí, when the father of the Bajsébo Majsá, who

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abduction, they practice the couvade, there is segregation of the woman during menstruation, there are initiation ceremonies for the boys who have reached puberty, and there is social stratification with castes.

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Since the arrival of the religious Missionary and the rubber worker in the region, two important phenomena have occurred. The most significant and most noticeable one is the rapid incorporation and diffusion of occidental material culture. The aluminum pot has replaced the pottery bowl, trousers have replaced the loincloth, the cotton dress has taken the place of the tree-bark skirt, hunting is no longer done with bow and arrow, but with a shotgun, and fishing is more often done with the fish-hook than with the trap.

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In the field of spiritual culture the influence of occidental culture has been more subtle and not so rapidly accepted. It is certain that the system of social organization is suffering a process of disintegration; the Indian who wishes to have a woman must be willing to settle in a mission, because the Missionaries have shrewdly gathered together all the women of marriageable age and have taken them to the Missions; the kinship terms no longer correspond to the present system; very few Indians still practice polyandry; but in spite of all this evidence, an adult Tukano Indian of today has not stopped thinking according to the typical Tukano mental processes. For example, Manuel Sierra, our interpreter, in spite of having lived for four consecutive years with his wife in the Departamento del Tolima, in Central Colombia, and in spite of having left the Vaupés at 17 years of age, still has the /105/ conviction that having eaten fish after the birth of his son without a Tukano shaman's having "blown" the food beforehand was the cause of the appearance of ulcers on his legs.

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The Tukano cosmogony presented below shows clearly the phenomenon of the transculturation. The short time available for this first journey of contact with Tukano culture did not permit us to check this cosmogony with other informants. Our informant, Marcos Sierra, is a shaman in the settlement of Guadalajara, on the Paca River.

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(6) COCUANE. -- According to Curt Nimuendajú (in a letter dated from Belem on Sept. 1, 1945, to Padre Antônio Glacone), it is the tribe also known as Coeuana, which, in 1927, still had representatives in Jandiá and another two sites by the mouth of the Uaupés. They had, however, lost their own idiom and spoke only the Língua Geral (see above, II -- 6, a /p. 43 /). They were the Indians who more easily became adapted to civilization, and from whom many caboclos of the Rio Negro are descended.

In August of 1957, according to Atayde Inácio Cardoso of the SPI (Serviço de Proteção ao Índio), there were still survivors of the Cocuana or Coianá in the town of S. Joaquim at the mouth of the Uaupés. João, the Tukano pajé /curer-sorcerer/ from Umarí (river Uaupés, a little above Lauretê-cachoeira), narrating the legends of the origins, says that the human beings started to ascend in the Cobra-grande /large snake/, and that "the Kuewãna, who in Tukano are called Pe'tãna, remained at the mouth of the Uaupés. But one of the Kuewãna ascended as far as Taracua-ponta and up to there was the limit of his lands."

(7) CUTIA. -- On the Içana there is a tribe known under the name of Cutia-tapuya, of the Arwake branch, whose name in the Baniva language would be Awadzurunái.

8) GIBOLA. -- Since during half of the last century many natives went from the Içana to the upper and lower Uaupés, we are inclined to think that the ones settled by Frei Gregório in Aracapurí are individuals of the žiboya-tapuya or Dzurēnē tribe of the Içana, from whom we collected a vocabulary (cf. "Discoteca Erno-linguístico-musical" by the Author and Boanari (II -- 6, a /p. 42 /).

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Among the Tukanos we obtained the following:

1. -- Wau-ro pōrá (25)

25. Pōrá (or poná, as it is pronounced on the rivers Uaupés and Papurí) means begotten, children, and it is only used in the plural. For simplification, in the lists that follow we shall omit the word children in the translation.

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The more advanced Indians (who speak Portuguese and have studied for some years in the schools of the Salesian Missions), when asked about these divisions, spontaneously add by way of explanation, "they are nicknames that the others impose on them." This is undoubtedly sometimes true, because they like to give nicknames. But, on the other hand, it is not in disagreement with the "baxséke wamē," "blown name" (cf. VIII, 1, b (4)). According to the legends, from the beginning the first chiefs had the nicknames, which passed to the whole group; for example, one of the "heads" was nicknamed "mimí," "hummingbird," and his descendants are known today as "Children of the hummingbird, Mimí-pōrá."

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The Tukano Patrícia Vasconcelos of the sub-division Kōma-ro-pōrá, from the povoado of S. Luzia on the river Papurí, told us in one of her interesting pieces of information: "The Wau-ro-pōrá are the Tukano from the head. Wau is his baxséke wamē (blown name). Formerly, he hid /this footnote is continued on the following page in the original source/ himself in the plant called Wau-mutō, in order to watch the girls taking a bath. The monkey Wau (in Nheengatú wāya-pisá) is very fond of the fruits of that tree. The girls, while they were bathing, heard a noise in the tree, immediately looked in that direction, and saw the man hidden among the branches. They all cried out: wau nibē! it is the wāya pisá!

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1) YEBÁ-MASÁ

1) People-Name-Language. -- Yebá-masá is their denomination in the mother tongue, although they do not know the meaning of this term (41).

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41. Lucas, the old Tukano from S. Luzia, as has already been said (IV-2, a), explained to Padre Antonio Giaccone that Yepá-masá (as they say in Tukano) means gente-da-terra /people of the land/, and that the natives who reached the Papurí afterwards called the Tukano this. It is to be noted that Yepá, according to the legends, is the son of Búxpó (the Thunder), and the Indians, with some religious notions, say that it is God, the Son. Koch G. (Z. I., 216) met on the Tiquié an Indian woman by the name of Inácia, of the Yepália tribe, with beautiful physiognomic features. Would it be another spelling of Yepá?

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Their idiom is classified in the Tukano family, as it is shown by the Vocabulary (cf. Discoteca Etno-linguístico-musical and Idiomas Indígenas da Amazônia). In contrast to the Tukano, they are slender types, of medium stature like them or even shorter. Small face, tapering toward the chin. Physiognomy little or not at all Mongoloid. Coarser hair, black or dark, not lissotrichous, as generally befalls the natives of Brazil. At times they even exhibit slight waves. Dark eyes, nose low at the root, like the Tukano, but higher and finer tip. The men ordinarily have the ears pierced.

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With an insignificant mandioca-agriculture, they are principally hunters, and they live on wild fruits. For this reason the consumption of ipadú /coca/ is great among them (cf. VI - 4, 1 (4)). They all use the hammock of 30 threads. Their festivals are frequent.

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In some cases they crush and chew the pure pepper: the Indian pepper (capsicum frutescens, Willd. of the Solanaceae) and many others, such as those called koró-byá, awí-byá, oxbó-byá, etc.

It is amazing how even children two years old or perhaps less take the beijú moistened in the quinhapira without showing that they feel the burning of the pepper, which is excessive for our taste.

The pepper is used by them as a stimulant for the appetite, due to the lack of salt or other seasonings.

3) Kaxpí (Nheengatú: Caápi) (57).

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57. As we observe below regarding the Ipadú, the word Kaxpí might be derived from the Nheengatú Caápi, or vice versa. It is certain, on the one hand, that the use of kaxpí is a very ancient one and is lost in the legends, and, on the other hand, that it is general among all the tribes of the region.

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The origin and use of Kaxpí is lost in legend (cf. "Lendas do Uaupés /Legends of the Uaupés/" by the Author). At a feast that took place among the Wanína of Carurú-cachoeira (river Uaupés), with the participation of the Kubẽwãna and Huhudẽne (from Uaupim-cachoeira, river Aiarí, trib. of the Içana) and elements from several other tribes, on the days of the 24th and 25th of April of 1955, a Tukano pajé, Henrique by name, from Japú-igarapé (trib. of the Uaupés), brought with much care a pair of instruments called cheõnõ (that is, catarrh, gripe), very old and religiously preserved by him as a fortunate heir of his ancestors. They were similar to a small wooden horn, reinforced with rolled tucum fiber and measuring about 25 centimeters. It was made to sound by blowing with force through the upper orifice, and simultaneously slowly opening the lower orifice, slightly wider than the upper one,

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and which was being obstructed by the palm of the hand. The sound imitated a child's crying. The possessor of the instruments explained that the eheõñõ is the "mother of the kaxpí." The unrestrained native imagination, excited by the drinks, especially by the Kaxpí, upon hearing this sound, relives the legend and perhaps even reproduces the legendary scene of the first components of the group, who fell upon the newborn and ate his bones, "which were Kaxpí."

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Kaxpí is a drink of bitter flavor, which is obtained from some vines, especially of the genus banistéria. I would not know whether it is more accurate to call it stimulant or narcotic, violent and almost /229/ instantaneous for the Indians (58).

58. Thus A. R. Wallace describes (Viagens pelo Amazonas e Rio Negro / on the Amazon and Rio Negro/, 381) the effect of the kaxpí: "An old Indian advanced toward the middle of the room, with a large (?) clay pot, which seemed recently painted, and which was put on the ground. Then, squatting, the old man stayed down, in front of the pot, and started to stir the contents. Then he filled with liquid two small cuías, and, rising, he extended his arms, holding, however, a cuia in each hand. After a short pause two Indians advanced in his direction, carrying their bows and arrows and their spears. Each one, holding the cuia offered, drank the amount that it contained. Because that drink was excessively bitter, each one made a very ugly face. For half a minute perhaps they remained motionless. Suddenly both gave a hard blow on the strings of their bows, making them vibrate; they shook their spears, stamped their feet on the ground, and then went to look for their seats.

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plumage, they are graceful and light in flight. They believe that it is a group of spirits or "people," who dance in the air. They call them ĩ'rã nõ'myá (girls of the sierra) and assert that they do not make nests, because nobody has ever found them sitting in the nest.

b) They admit the transformation of the animals. They believe, for example, that some worms that proliferate in the bacaba tree become transformed, on the occasion of eclipses, into the fish bũxkõã-wi (or matapĩ, of the Siluridae), because they find a certain likeness with such worms. Confirmation of this origin seems to them to be disclosed in the fact that such fish are found still alive in the forest after the lezfrias (igapós) dry out. They say that, because of having been worms, they flee to the forest when timbo is put in the streams.

We point out (VII -- 4, j (1)/see 4, f (1)/) that they admit the possibility of human persons being transformed, temporarily or permanently, into animals; and vice versa.

They assert that the parrots are "children of the forest," nãxkã wimãrã. Actually they are children of Boraró (see VII -- 4, d (56) /see 4, d (5b)/) or Curupira. They live naked, playing; whenever they want to go about, they put on feathers and fly.

They tell interesting stories about the origin of certain animals; for example, Ahĩ, inambũ /bird/, was previously a very pretty girl. The parrots yeũ arose through the transformation of two sisters, wives of a handsome Baré youth.

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c) We have pointed out elsewhere (VII -- 2, e (1)) their belief in immortality itself. They say that formerly they did not eat animal flesh. It was permitted to add worms and insects to the exclusively vegetable diet. During this time of a vegetarian regimen, there were no sicknesses, they say. Those appeared after their parents started to eat the flesh of fish and of animals. During certain illnesses the pajé will immediately prescribe that they abstain from the meat of large animals (anta, deer, monkey, etc.).

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They assert, moreover, that in the beginning the Tukano not only did not die, but did not even grow old. After they had lived many, many years, always strong, they ended their life when someone cast a malefice, dohasẽ, on them.

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subjects (3).

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3. General Couto de Magalhães, in spite of his friendly relations with many natives, reveals this silent discretion of theirs: "The Indians are very reserved and discreet in everything concerning a religious topic. In the middle of the most animated conversation, if one directs to them any question intended for the clarification of any of these points, they immediately become cool, at times somber, and either answer with monosyllables or do not answer at all" (Ensaíos de Anthropologia, /Essays in Anthropology/. 495).

/318/ b) Christian influences.

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We mention only three proofs of Christian influence: 1st -- the inclusion of elements of the Christian tradition in the native legends (as will be seen in the work in preparation "Lendas do Uaupés /Legends of the Uaupés/") (4);

4. There are some points in these legends (as we shall see in another volume, "Lendas do Uaupés") that make us admit Christian diffusion. And we are not referring to the narrations of the alumni of the Catholic Missions. As we more than once had the opportunity to verify, in the exposition of their legends they insert episodes and names of personages about which they have heard in the catechesis. One proof of this is the Tukano Cosmogony revealed by the pajé Marcos Sierra to Marcos Fulop (cf. n. 65 /sic; see note 71/, Ch. VII-4, e (2c)).

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a) Wāx-tf or Juruparí (23).

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23. The young Tukano Casimiro Sampaio gave (1949) this contradictory information: "The Wāx-tf live in society. They make noise. They do not appear. They do not do any harm. /The final quotation marks are missing./ This subject about the spirits will be more fully developed in the book "Lendas do Uaupés /Legends of the Uaupés/."

He lives in the interior of the forests, in the darkest places and in the abandoned huts. He appears, however, even in the malocas, in the form of a black man, hairy, ugly, covered with ashes. A Tukano informant (Dorotéia Brito) said that: "When he makes himself seen in some house, it is a sign of sicknesses that will come. He likes to strangle chickens. When the broad hen makes noise, it is because Wāx-tf moved it." At any noise that they hear in the house or in the forest, they immediately think of Wāx-tf. A strange animal that they see, a figure, it must be he, and they yell, full of fear.

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They attribute the echo, axká-keoãrõ, to Wāx-tf, who is imitating some sound. It seems to them on many occasions that they hear in the noises of the forest and the cachoeiras, and in the whispering of the winds, faraway echoes of the songs and dances performed by Wāx-tf.

It is to be noted that Wāx-tf is not an individual; there are many of them; rather it is an entire class. Among them one par excellence, who would be the principal one. This one, especially in the origin of the nation, did them much harm: he stole the children, impregnated their women, and did other evil things to them, killed the men, etc. Tired, finally, of their /the next line in the original source properly belongs on the next page and is repeated there; it is therefore omitted here in the translation/ yoke, because, besides so many bad things, he forced them into tasks and very difficult demonstrations, the men got

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together, caught him, tied him up with cipos, and burned him. According to one legend narrated by the pajé Vicente Rodrigues of the Taryana tribe and other /330/ Arwake narrators, it was O'x-kó who burned Wāx-tf, also called Bisiu. From the ashes, in this same place, there grew two paxiúbas /palms/, waxtá (24).

24. It is to be noted that the name of the paxiuba in Tucano, waxtá, reminds one of that of Wāx-tf. From the same root, wax, we have the term that indicates the hernia truss or loincloth, waxó-ro, the wāx-tf-kēō, tipitf or the press with which they squeeze the mass of mandioca to make the flour, objects that, like the sacred instruments, were a gift from Wāx-tf. It should be noted that it is also from paxiúba that they make the parís and cacurís for fishing, and, not infrequently, also the walls of the malocas.

with which they make the sacred instrument called mñtf (Uaupés mñtf or Juruparf (25)

25. As for the etymology of the term Juruparf, Stradelli (Vocabulário Nheengatú-português, entry Juruparf) recalled to an Indian that someone had told him Juruparf meant "the one produced from the fruit." The Indian answered him: "intimāi, Iuruparf, céra onheên putáre o munha iarié iurú parí uá, no, not at all, the name of Juruparf means the one that made the closing of our mouth" (iurú, mouth, and parí, enclosure for fishing; cf. 5, a (2b) /Ch. VI/).

in the Língua Geral) in memory of the great feat. So some of their legends say, and with this they identify Wāx-tf with the personage Juruparf of the Tupí legends.

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 (171) the details of which are as yet incompletely known. At one point or another Cubeo culture resembles virtually that of any other tropical forest tribe of the Amazon Basin. But to point this out is simply another way of calling attention to the common underlying character of all tropical forest cultures. More specifically, one is aware of the strong Tupian influences observable in such traits as the large communal house, a system of fortification, slavery, extended patrilineal families, and the practice of giving a child the name of an ancestor. The Tupian intrusion up the headwaters of the Amazon and its tributaries is probably quite old. Of more recent date and a more striking example of acculturation from native sources is the Arawakan influence. In the relationships between Arawakan-speaking tribes and Tucanoans there has been the opportunity for massive interchange of cultural features, for apart from the ordinary modes of cultural influence, of trading, visiting, and intermarrying, entire social segments, usually sibs, it would seem, have been accepted as entities into one another's tribal organization. Since sib relations in the region are founded upon intensive reciprocal ceremonial participation, it is inevitable that entire ceremonial complexes will be exchanged once a foreign group has been drawn into the social structure. That the social structures will also become mutually compatible may be taken for granted. The student of Cubeo is almost instantly aware of the Arawakan influence, in vocabulary and in religious concepts. The Cubeo culture hero *Kúwai* is the Arawakan *Kówai*. The term for jaguar and for shaman, *yaví*, is shared by Tucanoans and Arawakans. As Koch-Grünberg was the first to observe (1909, I, 129 ff.), the complex mourning ceremonies among Cubeo and among Arawakan-speaking tribes are also remarkably similar.
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 197 It was Koch-Grünberg who called attention to the rapidity of culture interchange in the Northwest Amazon. On the Papurí River he encountered Tariana Indians who were giving up their native Arawakan, having just arrived from the Isana, and were beginning to speak Tucanoan (1909, I, 116). Similarly he reported that a Cariban-speaking Umaua group had settled among Cubeo of the upper Vaupés and had begun to speak Tucanoan (1909, II, 65). On the Cuduiari River the *Hürúwá* had given up Arawakan in favor of the dominant Tucanoan (1909, II, 81). On the Querarí River the *Djurémawa* had also yielded up Arawakan for Tucanoan (1909, II, 66). Macú also had assimilated both to Arawakan and to Tucanoan (1909, I, 50, II, 98). How fleeting these language shifts can be is brought out by Koch-Grünberg's example of an Arawakan group that had assimilated to Tucanoan and was almost immediately shifting

every turn and landmark of the waterways, their utilization of forest products is also extensive. From the forest they derive mainly raw materials for construction: woods, fibers, and leaves for roof thatching; and some food produce: wild fruits and berries, ants and grubs. Forest foods are supplementary and minor contributions to the diet. In a sense, game are riverine too because they are hunted along water courses. Only occasionally do hunters enter the forests on foot. They prefer to go by canoe, entering the smaller *caños* to catch animals as they come to drink. Hunting is important; the flesh of game animals — the tapir in particular — is highly appreciated and never fails to add a festive note to a meal. On balance, however, it is fish and other water creatures that furnish the main source of animal protein to the diet.

Fishing is the daily masculine routine; hunting is spasmodic, undertaken according to circumstance, as when someone has observed a herd of wild peccary or fresh tapir dung. As a break in the monotony of everyday work, and when the appetite has become jaded with fish, a hunting party is an enlivening experience.

The Indians do not complain about the corner of nature they occupy. They recognize and accept periodicity, times of glut and times of scarcity. Abundance is pleasing to them and scarcity does not alarm them. They expect it to pass. The Indians believe that they are living now in a "golden age." In the past, before they had learned farming and all the techniques of hunting and fishing, they were always on the verge of starvation and lived on tree saps and bark, their traditions say.

Once, while gathering roots, according to one tradition, they came upon the *ainhokü* (manioc) tree, a tree that had leaves of the manioc plant. Manioc tubers fell from it. They had never encountered such a tree and did not know what to do with it. Agouti (*Burü*) came along eating. An old man asked him what he was eating and Agouti replied he was eating manioc. The manioc at that time had no skin. The tree grew in a clearing with no growth around it. It was guarded by many animals. The old man thought, "What are we going to do?" Then along came *Hibühokü* (a rodent), and he told the people to clear a *chagra* and to plant. "Now, let us cut down the tree," he told them. The old man made a *chagra* and the people cut down the tree with stone axes and puño teeth. When the tree had fallen, all the animals came to eat. The old man then saw that one branch held plantains, another sugar cane, another *turi* (poison), another *pudjü* (a potato-like tuber), and another *yapika* (sweet potato). They then cut off each limb and planted it.

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32 THE CUBEO

- 773 From *Kiwai*, the culture hero, the people learned how to fish with
- 226 hook and line and how to hunt with bow and arrow and with the
- 224 blowgun. The Indians say that in ancient times they did not hunt the
- [177] tapir. It was not until they acquired guns that they learned how to
- [411] kill tapir. Other animals they did not eat because of religious taboos
- 262 that are no longer in force. Paca and armadillo were devourers of
- [614] human corpses and were hence forbidden; eating sloth would make
- people lazy; and finally, all animals whose names were represented
- in the sib genealogies were taboo to members of that sib.

PRODUCTION

- 261 The Cubeo do not value abundance of food for its own sake.
- 433 Plenty is, to be sure, widely enjoyed as a break in the daily routine.
- (251) It is not valued for its promise of satiety, for the Indians customarily
- (554) eat moderately, but for the opportunity it offers for a gay feast. A big
- [614] catch of game or of fish excites the people because it does not occur
- [574] often. There is no desire to overdo, however, and no more is brought
- than will be consumed directly or can be safely preserved by smoking
- and drying. Since, at best, smoking preserves meat for only a week or
- two in the tropical climate there is not much point in increasing
- a fisherman's or a hunter's "take." Social status is a minor issue in
- food production since feasting is essentially intrasib, whereas social
- status comes into play most sharply between sibs.
- 433 In short, there are no strong motives to stimulate hunting and fish-
- ing other than appetite and desire for variety. The pressure in pro-
- duction falls upon the women. If we are to speak of "surplus" at all in
- 244 Cubeo food production it can be only in connection with the manioc
- 433 crop, which is regarded as the woman's contribution, even though it
- [462] is the men who make the clearing. The limiting factor in manioc pro-
- duction is not land as much as it is labor and morale. A large com-
- 244 munity under a forceful headman can clear a good deal more land
- 433 than is needed for subsistence. In the case of manioc, subsistence can
- 252 be measured precisely by the amount that is converted directly to
- 433 manioc cake (*aino*) and to tapioca porridge. "Surplus" is what is
- 252 converted to chicha (*unkundy*) and to farinha. There can be no
- [177] doubt but that the machete, now universal in the region, improved
- [412] the standard of nourishment considerably. The real limitation upon
- [462] production is woman power. Since women carry through all phases
- of manioc production, from planting and harvesting to conversion
- into the final product, they are the ultimate "bottleneck." A woman
- working only to prepare manioc as food is already fully occupied.

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Technical incest, that is, incest outside the nuclear household, does occur and is not necessarily regarded seriously. A man told me that his sib sister, having become a widow, returned home. An ardent woman, she made sexual advances to him. He then told the headman that his sib sister had seduced him. The headman scolded the woman and hastily arranged for her marriage to an elderly *Tatuyo*. In the case of close incest, that is, within the extended family, the offenders are driven out of the sib. I learned of no cases.

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Adultery is a common offense and is not very serious unless compounded by fears of sorcery. Only the man will be suspected of sorcery, never the woman. Since it is the women who are commonly regarded as the seducers and the men as innocent victims, the consequences of adultery are apt to be little more than a heated quarrel. An adulterous woman may receive a thrashing either from the husband or from her parents-in-law. In charges of adultery a headman,

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concerned first with harmony in the sib, seeks to placate feelings by emphasizing the culpability of the woman. The following example illustrates this. At a drinking party among the *Bahukiwa*, when intoxication was at its peak some hours before dawn, the headman suddenly began to berate a man of the sib for adultery, accusing him of having seduced the young wife of his (the headman's) son. The son himself did not enter into the controversy, but he explained quietly to those about him that his wife was too passionate. Whereupon the headman shifted his attention to the young woman and began to scold her for wearing love charms in her hair and for enticing men. Then, his anger rising, he slapped the girl sharply in the face. The accused sibman, now ignored, moved away unconcerned. The young wife, for her part, showed no distress at being slapped. A few minutes later she was as flirtatious as ever, this time with another man. The headman, still wrathful, delivered a lecture on the proprieties of married life, remarking that it is not fit for a wife to request coitus; she must wait for her husband. The next day a younger unmarried daughter of the headman was assigned to chaperon the errant wife, a task she accomplished with suitable diligence.

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The Cubeo regard a woman as unruly and are almost prepared to accept her adultery as inevitable. Nevertheless, an adulteress is reviled as "a woman without shame." A husband's chagrin and anger at his wife's adultery are softened somewhat by tales of *Kiwai's* difficulties with adulterous wives. In one tale, however, *Kiwai* crushes his wife against a tree after she has copulated with a snake in her manioc garden.

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DEVELOPMENT OF THE INDIVIDUAL

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The Cubeo are also fond of the young of animals and treat them with intelligent solicitude. One man built a long platform in his house so that his dogs would not have to sleep on the ground. Men, having shot some monkeys, found an infant clinging to its mother's dead body. They massaged the monkey's breast, saying, "The baby should have the last drop of its mother's milk." 825

Toilet training is casual. No one who carries a child about shows annoyance or disgust at being soiled. The Cubeo are reticent about excretory functions but they do not teach by chiding. They have no fixed ideas as to when a child should be toilet trained. The only injunctions a crawling baby is likely to hear are warnings against injury, if it is too near the fire or the liquid starch with its poisonous content of prussic acid. Still, it is rare for a walking child to urinate or defecate in the house. 863

Walking and talking are actively encouraged. To help the child walk the father provides a harness (*laro*) through which the child's legs pass, allowing it to sit, stand, or walk. The harness is often suspended from a beam and serves as a tether for the child. Mother and father stimulate the child to talk by fluttering its lips. Lip fluttering is a game that persists into late childhood. Cubeo parents dread passivity in a child. They want to see it stirring about and restless. It is for this reason that the mother teases her infant, stirring it to anger or gaiety. The story is told that *Kūwai* once observed a passive child. He said, "The child must be made to move about," and so created the bothersome pium flies. 856 [773]

The crawling baby is still in its mother's charge. When it has begun to walk and to take solid nourishment, and its parents have resumed sexual relations, it is transferred to the care of an older sister. Every little girl from the age of six on is burdened with a walking baby that rides her left hip as it did its mother's. At this age, when it is learning to walk, many people look after the child. Its paternal grandmother becomes a principal guardian and looks after the child's feeding. After a new baby is born the separation of the young walking child from its mother becomes almost complete. A woman discourages nursing by coating her nipples with a bitter substance even though a boy has casual and playful access to his mother's breast until about the age of six. 85 [603] [862]

CHILDHOOD

In the life of a boy there is an interval of some four years when he no longer receives the same close attention from his mother and has 855

[text continues on p. 177]

DEVELOPMENT OF THE INDIVIDUAL

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be a child's ceremony, for it is the acting out of a mythical incident that has great appeal to the children. The children explained the game, or ceremony, to me as follows. Some children were left orphaned by the death of their father and they lived alone with their mother, who had very little food to give them. When they asked their mother for food one day and she replied that she had nothing for them they ran out of the house. Immediately a great hole formed in the center of the house. The children sat outside on the branch of a tree and sang *hmm hmm hmm*. The next morning the children returned to the house and again asked for food. Now the mother gave them some stale cassava crumbs. They ate and returned to their tree branch. Now they began to grow feathers, and after four days they had become *taintürü* birds. They returned to the house and lived in the newly formed hole while the eldest brother flew off each day to fetch food for them. It is he who is captured by the *abúhuwa* but manages to escape so that he can return and look after his younger brothers and sisters. The *abúhuwa* customarily attack and seize children who are neglected or have been abandoned by their parents. They are dangerous, but they are also slow-witted and so can be eluded. Adults, it should be said, pay no attention to this or any other kind of children's game.

There is another game in which a little girl constructs a bower of palm leaves around herself and waits to be flushed out by a boy hunter. As for toys, the boys spin tops of fruits, they make cat's cradles, they walk on stilts, and they make a plaited snake that catches a finger and tightens when stretched. Among the *Hehénewa* Koch-Grünberg observed a ball game played with corn-husk balls (1909, II, 226 ff.). This game, played by older men, I did not observe among the *Bahúkiwa*.

PUBERTY

The Cubeo do not recognize an abrupt transition from childhood to adulthood in the case of boys. Male maturity is an individual matter to them, although past the age of 15 a boy will almost surely be drawn out of the pack into the adult world. Boys, however, are subject to growth magic from the time they enter the play pack until they leave it. An account of these rites is reserved for a later chapter. The ordeal of the stinging ants, a feature of puberty rites elsewhere in the region, occurs among the Cubeo during one of these rites.

Girls undergo digital defloration at the age of eight, I was told. An old man of the sib who is no longer virile is charged with this

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832 The Cubeo women are sexually forward, a trait that seems to be
562 common in the Amazon Basin. Women become more licentious with
[171] age. Older women, those around the menopausal age, urge men to
have coitus with them, remarking jokingly, "We are more satisfying
than young girls because we have more sexual power [appetite]."
Adultery, as I have already observed, seems common, and it is ordi-
narily assumed or charged that it is the woman who seduced the
man. A married woman shows sexual interest in a man by grasping
his genitals or by conveying his hand to hers. Unmarried women are
less direct. Such women, however, are scornfully called *aménko*
(shameless woman). I was surprised to hear an angry woman address
her openly flirtatious daughter-in-law as *yavimiko* (bitch). Although
flirtatiously forward, women prefer to be vigorously subdued before
accepting coitus.

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The alligator or cayman is the Cubeo symbol of male lechery. Ac-
cording to one folk tale, the cayman was once a man. The wife of
Kiúwai, who was the daughter of *Munyinbekúku* (an Ancient), was
sleeping in her hammock. *Kiúwai* sent Cayman into the house to fetch
a light for a cigarette. Cayman wanted to copulate with the wife of
Kiúwai. She would not let him. He mounted her, nevertheless, and she
ate up the entire front of his stomach, as well as his penis. When
Kiúwai saw this he said to Cayman, "I warned you this would hap-
pen." Then *Kiúwai* took a square mat and with it mended the front
of Cayman. Then he threw Cayman into the water with the remark,
"You shall always be eaten."

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In view of the reputation for licentiousness that the Cubeo women
have, it is interesting that they attribute the growth of pubic hair on
a woman to frequency of coitus. At the same time, pubic hair on a
woman is regarded as unsightly. Women, accordingly, go to much
trouble and pain to depilate the pubic region. Older women allow
the hair to grow. In jest an old woman may say to a man, "You may
take my pubic hair and smoke it in a cigarette." The sexual allusion
is well understood.

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Cubeo mythology identifies copulation with female pubic hair.
Kiúwai, the culture hero, was the first to plant a hair from his head
upon the *mons* of his wife. He then copulated with her for the first
time, asking a small boy to watch and learn how it is done.

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In the recent past, Cubeo women wore no pubic covering, but men
always did. Now that women have become accustomed to skirts, dep-
ilation is no longer important. It persists, nevertheless.

* The Cubeo associate hair and tobacco. Hair is *puw*, and armpit hair is *puw butei* (literally, hair tobacco).

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no part. They stood aside and watched, but none wept. But as the last action, before the grave was to be covered over, the men and the older married women seized each boy and brought him forcefully to the grave, pushing him down to his knees and forcing him to touch the coffin. The grave was covered, the earth smoothed, and excess earth removed to leave no hump on the dance floor. Weeping continued for half an hour after the earth had been leveled. Then, abruptly, all mourning ceased and people resumed their customary activities. By noon the children were romping over the burial place.

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In the second phase of mourning, which pertains to the widow (*namyöpeko*) alone, all sib, subsib, and phratry mates arrive to grieve. Sib and subsib mates have an obligation to be the first mourners. Phratry mates who are passing by are obligated to pause and mourn. During this period of mourning the widow greets each arrival and escorts him or her to the burial place, where they both crouch, facing one another, arms about each other's shoulders, heads lowered, and weep. This weeping is ritualized. It begins abruptly and ends abruptly. This abruptness has impressed other observers as a mark of insincerity of grief. This is not the case at all, for mourning must, in CUBEO religious doctrine, become ritualized. One might say, however, that depth of grief and the expression of it need not be related too closely. As we have seen in several other contexts the CUBEO seek to identify an action with its appropriate emotion. Polite and restrained expressions of grief, as in Anglo-Saxon society, are inappropriate. The statement of grief must be a strong one. But as with any statement, it has a beginning and it has an end.

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Apart from her obligation to escort visiting mourners to her husband's grave, the widow has no other formal obligations of mourning. She may remarry after one year, although the prospects for her remarriage are actually poor. Even though the CUBEO sense a shortage of marriageable women, they seem to be afraid to marry a woman whose husband has died.

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The CUBEO narrate the myth that once death was not permanent. A woman had died and later returned to her husband. She pleaded vainly with him to accept her back. If he had taken his wife back, the people say, all the dead would then have been able to return to life.

FUNERAL ORATION BY A SON

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Quickly he died. An evil person, a thoughtless person, poisoned us. And so he died. He who was one of us. He [the murderer] did not care to behold us and so he did it. He [the deceased] did not live through the day. He, the evil one, will also die. He who has the poison, he shall go behind

that are specifically identified as the *Bekápwánuwa*, and that are used in the whipping and initiation ceremonies as well as in ritual bathing. 534

1. *Emihéhika* (also known as *haraibipobü*: whipping staff) is a wide-mouth trumpet of bark wound within a framework of splints. It has a short palm-tube mouthpiece set into a ceramic plate that is mounted firmly to the upper end of the bark. This trumpet is some 30 inches long.

2. *Kwákhüuku* (also known as *Uménahonkü*) is also a wide-mouth bark trumpet that is over five feet long and is played with one end resting on the ground.

3. *Bwü* (Agouti) is a long flute of a black palm, also with a mouthpiece set in a clay mount and with two external reeds bound around an opening toward the top. It is about four feet long.

4. *Onpwénda* is a flute similar to *Bwü* except that it has no separate mouthpiece and is only some 30 inches long.

5. *Onpwénda kádjüwe* is identical with *Onpwénda*, and is the length of a man's forearm. It is the shortest of the flutes.

Bwü and *Onpwénda kádjüwe* are said to be the strongest and fiercest of the ancestors and are esteemed for the vigor with which they whip. They are referred to as *parihiekü* (very powerful beings). *Bwü* is, of course, the founding ancestor of the *Bahúkiwa*. 769 (614)

Among the *Hehénewa*, of the *Cuduiari* the largest bark-wound trumpet is also called *Uménahonkü*. Koch-Grünberg translated this name correctly as "Dragonfly." The name, however, is that of a first ancestor of the *Hehénewa*. (534) (614)

The whipping rites, the Cubeo say, go back to the "first people," who were taught what to do by *Kúwai*. At the beginning, however, it was women who played the flutes and trumpets. They spent so much time on play that they did nothing else. *Kúwai* corrected this. He took the instruments from the women and gave them to the men, warning them never to allow the women to get them back.² This is the story that is cited to explain why the instruments are taboo to 769 534 773 (784)

² A variant account states that the *Bekápwánuwa* had belonged to the women and that the men were afraid of them. The women came out of the forest bearing the instruments and the men ran away in fear. Then *Dekókü* (ghost person) learned about this and said, "Women have no right to this." He came down to witness the ceremony of the women. He saw only women and he said to them, "You are women, you have no right to this. Now I am going to take this away from you." He brought the instruments to the men and laid them on their forearms. When the women had the *Bekápwánuwa* they danced all the time and never worked. After the men had received the instruments they allowed one old woman to see them. She turned insane and they had to kill her. Since then women have not been allowed to see the *Bekápwánuwa*.

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women. The men cautioned me not to speak of the *Bekápwānwa* to the women for fear they would be driven mad. A woman who hears about the Ancients will wander about singing their songs until she dies of her madness. If a woman actually sees the instruments, it is felt that she should be put to death by sorcery so that the secret will be kept from the other women.

The *Bekápwānwa* come annually in the summer when a species of palm berry (*houhá*) and certain other fruits and berries are ripe. Of their coming it is said, "They come to whip the boys to make them grow." At the same time, it is explained that if the people did not dance with the flutes and trumpet, the berries and fruits would not grow. The *Bahúkiwa* would not assert a magical connection, however, between the two kinds of growth, yet the association would seem to be an obvious one.

[56] As an age grade, youths are known as *hwinyó*, but as boys who need whipping for growth they are known as *bahúdjó*, which may be rendered as "bodying." A boy's first whipping occurs when he is no more than eight years old and continues until he leaves the play pack at about 15. Thereafter, as a man he continues to be whipped but under different auspices. As a man he accepts whipping voluntarily. As a boy it is imposed upon him by his elders.

I observed two initiation ceremonies, one among the *Bahúkiwa* and one among its subsib, the *Bahúkúdjauwí*.

The *Bahúkiwa* rites were conducted entirely by the younger men of the sib, not by the real elders as I had been led to believe. These younger men were in their prime of physical vigor. One was not yet married but he was very strong, energetic, and exceptionally capable in all respects. They were the men whom the play pack admired and emulated, to whom they attached themselves, and to whom they owed no special respect. The initiators were the fathers and the fathers' brothers with whom the boys could most readily feel at ease.

I was not invited to accompany the small band as they left the maloca in the early morning, the men in high spirits, the boys subdued, although they had been told only that they were going to pick berries. This was sheer euphemism since there are no secrets from the play pack. The gaiety of the initiators is characteristic. Only the women are expected to be afraid and one suspects that much of this is mock fright. Among the initiates was a boy of an in-law sib. But as a resident, a member of the play pack whose mother, the headman's sister, had standing as a household head of the sib, his initia-

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534 for this contradiction. One is that different Ancients are represented
114 at different times. This possibility, though, is one that was never
769 mentioned to me. The origin myth of mourning, it should be noted,
• [773] refers to *Xudjiko* only. The other is the possibility of error, since
Koch-Grünberg also labeled a trumpet used in initiation ceremonies
as *Uménahonkü*. *Oyne* and initiation trumpets are never the same.

765 The dances, rituals, and dramatic representations of these first
786 three days range over a variety of themes, but all have the common
[154] purpose of transforming grief and anger to joy. In keeping with the
characteristic pattern of Cubeo ritual that begins slowly and sol-
emnly and ends in frenzied disorder, the first phases of the *oyne* also
start from the dark mood of grief and anger and end in a sexual
[536] orgy. This first part of the *oyne*, in which the emphasis is upon trans-
formation of feeling, is largely dramatic. The second part of the
oyne, that lasts from late afternoon until the dawn of the following
day, carries forward the theme of emotional transformation, ending
in fact in true sexual license, when men are privileged to copulate

765 with their sib and phratry brothers' wives. Its main themes, however,
266 are religious and magical, including the aforementioned expulsion
[775] of the spirit of the dead as well as the magical absorption of the sub-
[614] stance of the deceased into the body of the sib. The latter is presum-
ably accomplished by pounding the exhumed limb bones of the
deceased into a powder and mixing them with chicha, which the men
of the sib drink.

765 The women are weepers and have, in the main, a passive ritual
562 role. They huddle together with their nursing infants in the rear
half of the house that for the occasion has been partitioned with a
six-foot-high fence of poles and leaves set so as to form at the center
an overlapping slit opening. The women are not allowed to see what
is going on in the male section, while the slit opening allows the
men to dance freely in and out of the women's section. Stimulated
by masculine-initiated activity, the women burst into fits of ritual-
ized weeping, their only active ritual role. Their proper role is to
[786] be acted upon, and to be brought to a point of ritualized sexual ex-
citement so that they can be engaged in ritual and simulated coitus.

53 The masked dancers represent the nonhuman world of beings, the
765 beneficent and malevolent, the threatening and the ludicrous, as
[776] well as the neutral creatures. Their songs (*kwimatuwü*) are mournful
and indicate grief for the deceased, but their dances and dramatic
representations are of their own world. Each mask generally has its
own song and characteristic dance, although the connection between
mask, dance, and song is not rigidly kept. As the ceremony reaches

THE MOURNING CEREMONY

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different significances in different tribes. The Central Amazon is one center of distribution of ceremonial masks and the Northwest Amazon region is another. In the former region, masks are not of bark cloth but of palm leaves that cover the entire body. The head-pieces with human features are cylindrical and of wood. According to Cubeo tradition, they, too, once used palm-leaf masks before being taught by *Kiwai* to prepare bark cloth. Karl von den Steinen, who collected many dance masks from the Xingú River region, never saw them used and guessed that they were mainly ornamental. As among the Cubeo, the Xingú region masks represent animals, beasts, and fish (Steinen, 1894). Along the Araguaia, a tributary of the Amazon, ceremonial masks seem to be part of a secret men's cult and, of particular interest to a Cubeo comparison, they are also used in funeral rites (Krause, 1910, p. 109; Lehmann, 1911). In both parts of the Central Amazon, the Xingú and the Araguaia, the dance songs that are associated with the masks are similar to those of the Cubeo and may have been brought there by Arawakan-speaking peoples who still live there. In the Vaupés River region all the Arawakan tribes share the masked dance cult with Tucanoans. However, among Tucanoan tribes, Uanana and Desana do not have them (Koch-Grünberg, 1909, II, 64).

To the west of the Cubeo, in northeast Peru for example, masked dances are, surprisingly, not found among the Tucanoan-speaking peoples but rather among the Witotoans, such as the so-called Witoto proper, the Bora, and the Muinave. In this same region the Yagua, the Okaina, and the Tucuna, all of whom speak as yet unidentified languages, also have bark-cloth masks (Tessmann, 1930). The nature of their masked dances is similar enough to those of the Cubeo to leave very little doubt that they are historically connected. The masks of these tribes represent animals and demons, as among the Cubeo, and are similarly decorated. However, nowhere in this region are bark-cloth masks used in connection with mourning rites. The Tucuna use masks in girls' puberty rites, while among the Bora masked dances accompany the harvest festival of the pupunha palm. This is a point of historical interest, since the Cubeo mourning ceremony is held during the season when the pupunha palm is ripened and has other "harvest rite" motifs. Because information on masked dances in the Amazon area is so limited, no firm conjecture can be made as to their place of origin. It would seem, though, that the Cubeo have taken ceremonies that in other tribes pertain to harvest festivals, secret men's cults, or girls' first menstrual rites, and have adapted them to funeral rites. Simi-

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Apart from the Ancients there is *Kürai*, who has been referred to here as a culture hero and as a transformer. He is not, as Koch-Grünberg called him, a "god." The Cubeo and the Arawakan tribes in the area share *Kürai*. Among the Cubeo he is a mythical being who has long since withdrawn from any relationship with people by taking up a specific abode upon the high savannah. There are no rites involving *Kürai* today, nor are there traditions that refer to any sacred relationship between the people and *Kürai* in the past. *Kürai* taught the Cubeo all their useful arts — fishing, cultivation, the making of all major implements. He instructed them in copulation. Illustrative of Cubeo attitudes toward the sexes is *Kürai*'s constant difficulties with women — all human — and, by contrast, his orderly relations with Cubeo men. It was, as the legend narrates, his disappointments and frustrations in dealing with Cubeo women that led *Kürai* to take up what is virtually a voluntary exile. *Kürai* as transformer altered terrain features and created some smaller rivers. His role as creator is a limited one.

Some Indians did speak of a god whom they called *himénihinkū* (my little soul). This god lives in the sky (*karáno*) in a house with his wife. He accepts good people into his house and puts bad people in a house for dogs. There is *Uménahonkū*, an Ancient, but *himénihinkū* is evidently a Christian doctrine that has been badly understood by the Indians of the Cuduiari, whose relations with missionaries have been very marginal at best. Those Indians who had missionary contact attributed *himénihinkū* to Christian teaching and rejected the doctrine as alien to them. They scoffed, particularly at his role as a creator of the world and of man. A fundamental feature of Cubeo religious thought is its reluctance to grant broad and extraordinary powers to any being. I shall return to this point.

Earlier writers on the Indians of the Vaupés have without exception reported "gods," "demons," or a "great spirit" called *Yurupari*. In simple fact there is no *Yurupari*. The term is jargon from the trade language of the Amazon based heavily upon Tupian and is used indiscriminately by the Indians to refer to anything that is sacred and taboo. In the Northwest Amazon region the sacred trumpets and flutes receive the designation of *yurupari* most commonly. But the people will put off any prying into their religion with *yurupari*. I never heard the *Bahúkiwa* refer to *yurupari* except when talking to some white man whose questions they did not regard seriously.

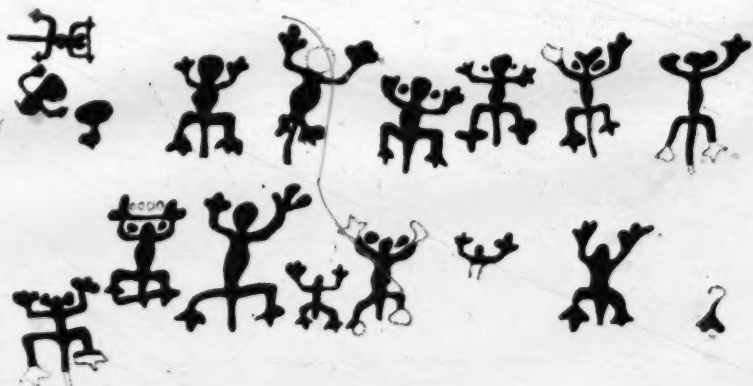
The ancestor beings represent for the Cubeo the only true beneficent "supernaturals" with whom they have relations. But we note that they are not credited with extraordinary powers. They do not

Tukano

115 Hitherto José had remained silent and appeared to know nothing of these engravings nor had he given us any indication of their whereabouts. This was surprising, for, being himself a Barasana, of a Tukano clan, he was presumably aware of their existence. Then one evening, perhaps encouraged by our curiosity, he told us the following anecdote:

101 'The Barasana have always lived here, they were born here. They and the
 773 Taiwano have always been friends and had common enemies in the Tatuya,
 776 Karapana and Ureti whom they used to fight with bow and arrows. They both have the same god who has power over all things. It is he who made Ni, in his own likeness, the drawings have been here for ever, and this is the only place where they occur. The other Indians do not have them.' He pointed to a great natural pillar of granite called the Bee, which stood in the river upstream of Ni: 'That rock was once a pile of manioc, which the people had placed there. Ni turned it into stone. Below the rapids is the under-water cave, his palace, where the god sings to the drawings and the spirits.'

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Epilogue

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437 would be carefully inspected by Indians we met later, who would disregard them if they considered them inferior work.

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Sometimes we would play music we had recorded in the Amazon to see what the 'highlanders' reaction was. Then we would play classical music or jazz. Usually a simple tune or one with a distinct rhythm conveyed something to them. There was some interest in Bach or Mozart, but none in Brahms. As for their own music, once we had shown our interest or they had heard the play-back on the recording machine, they all - with the exception of the Kogi - would play to us for hours, and the range of sounds and instruments was astonishing.

Astonishing, too, was the realization that an Indian besides being a cultivator, a hunter, a fisherman, a boat-maker and house-builder, besides knowing the tribal legends and myths and the arts of basket weaving, wood carving and design, was also a musician, not only playing but himself making, with considerable skill, a wide range of musical instruments.

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Among the Tukano alone we counted fifteen such instruments. A jingle-rattle is admittedly not very difficult to play, but it requires skill to make one and to design it so that each shell produces a certain note. A panpipe or a deer-bone flute may not be difficult to make, but it takes practice and determination to play one.

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The Indian is deeply involved in the natural world about him, and just as he incises on a calabash the representation of a beetle or a frog, he will try to imitate the calls of birds or the sounds of the forest. All his instruments reflect this forest environment: snail and tortoise shells, deer-bones, nutshells and gourds. But his music is also deeply involved with myth and ritual. We found the giant *jurupari* flutes were never placed where women could see them. They were used during the ceremony to call their god. When the women heard the flutes, booming like alpine horns in the distance, they fled into the forest, not daring to return till the flutes had been returned to the stream bed. The sacred significance of many of the instruments may account for their elaborate designs.

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Very little is known of the origin of Indian, as of all music. Perhaps it first evolved during religious ceremonies, through the waving of a stick in the air or its being beaten on the floor; or perhaps through the rustle of marsh reeds held in the hand and shaken as Severiano did during the ceremony of Santa Haí. This may have been the first sound to suggest the use of nutshells and seed-rattles.

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When we were living with the Casacará-Motilon Alec Clark told us that the Indians put the mark of a stag's antlers on their foreheads to bring them luck. He also gave us his interpretations of the legend of the puma and the deer, from whom the clan was descended. In the Amazon the shaman is said to be able to disappear at will and travel through the forest in the guise of a puma, because this animal was the most dreaded of all. Both these animals

Colombian Kaleidoscope

occur constantly in the myth and legend of the tribes, as does the Motilon legend of the twins. It is a legend known from Mexico to the tribes living in Tierra del Fuego, which suggests a considerable antiquity.

Just as the puma is usually the symbol of fear, so the deer is credited by the Indian with fairy-like, almost feminine, qualities, perhaps because of its shyness and speed. It has been suggested that the deer is the symbol of new life, having been regarded as such by early migrations of hunting folk moving south along the chain of the Andes from North America. It was thus associated with first menstruation and all the accompanying rites when a girl reaches puberty and is able to create new life, and its hooves were used by women as ornaments or rattles. The deer-bone flute may have been the first musical instrument used by the Indians.

Several tribes have no musical instruments at all. Possibly these were the first people to reach South America. Later migrations may have brought instruments with them, possibly others evolved on the spot. The similarity of some Kogi and Motilon instruments to those used in Central America suggests a more recent influence.

At first we found it difficult to distinguish the sounds of the different instruments if we could not see them. But after a while we learnt to recognize not only the instrument but also the many different tunes of each tribe. A Noanamá girl would sing to herself for hours on end. The Motilon had a vast repertoire of walking, war and harvest songs. Instrumental tunes were fewer and some, as in the case of the haunting call of the snail shell, tended to be very repetitive. The Tukano, however, had innumerable panpipe tunes.

Indian music we at first found strange because we were accustomed to the European tone system. They have no conception of note vibrations to obtain an octave. Yet they can tell whether one instrument is in tune or not with another. A panpipe can be cut to a certain length to produce a particular sound, but it is difficult to produce the exact note, so they may raise the pitch by adding sand, or putting water or even *chicha* inside.

The panpipe tunes in the Tukano festival were the nearest thing we heard to orchestral music; each group played antiphonally, with sometimes two or three groups playing different tunes. We could not however make out whether combination or competition was the motive behind this weird performance.

The Tukano had no conception of counterpoint, though their playing was often harmonious. We did find it in the singing of the Noanamá - perhaps the result of mission teaching. One Tukano chant is almost identical to a western Irish folk lament.

In contrast to African negro music in which stringed instruments and drums predominate, Indian music is mainly that of the rattle and the flute. Every type of construction is found, from humming top and conch shell to